



Audubon CONNECTICUT

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**TESTIMONY OF
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AUDUBON CONNECTICUT**

COMMERCE COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING

February 26, 2009

Audubon Connecticut, the state organization of the National Audubon Society with more than 10,000 members statewide, works to protect birds, other wildlife and their habitats through education, science and conservation, and legislative advocacy for the benefit of people and the earth's biological diversity. Through our network of community-based nature centers, protected wildlife sanctuaries, and local volunteer Chapters, we seek to connect people with nature and inspire the next generation of conservationists.

**IN SUPPORT OF H.B. 6504 AN ACT CONCERNING RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE FACE OF CONNECTICUT STEERING COMMITTEE.**

**SUPPORT WITH CHANGES: S.B. 969 AN ACT CONCERNING BROWNFIELDS
FUNDING.**

Senator LeBeau, Representative Berger, and members of the Commerce Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak today in support of *H.B. 6504 AAC Recommendations of the Face of Connecticut Steering Committee*, and *S.B. 969 AAC Brownfields Funding* that seek to provide much-needed funding for brownfield development from two existing conservation programs: The Face of Connecticut (P.A. 08-174) and the Community Investment Act (P.A. 05-228).

Audubon Connecticut **strongly supports** the integrated approach to safeguarding and enhancing Connecticut's diverse community character and varied landscapes that is contained in H.B. 6504 and S.B. 969. Restoring brownfields, preserving historic structures, providing safe, affordable housing, ensuring the future of working lands, and protecting ecologically significant natural areas are essential to the economic and environmental health of our State.

H.B. 6504:

We are very grateful to the Committee for bringing this bill forward, and are fully supportive of adding brownfields to the Face of Connecticut effort. Restoring brownfields is a smart approach to revitalizing urban centers and helps to relieve the development pressure on greenfields. Audubon *urges* the Committee to align the funding

and other provisions of H.B. 6504 to include all the programs currently covered by the Face of Connecticut proposal. We urge the Committee to align H.B. 6504 in support of these existing conservation efforts, as well as brownfields restoration.

S.B. 969:

Audubon Connecticut *supports* the concept of adding brownfields restoration to the programs funded by the Community Investment Act, *but not if it means reducing support for the original four (4) program areas*: farmland protection; open space conservation; affordable housing; and historic preservation. We urge the Committee to provide *additional* revenues to support brownfields restoration in this program, rather than reducing funding for the existing conservation programs, which have broad support across the stakeholder communities that came together in support of this legislation in 2005.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on these important matters today.